

Message Text

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43

ACTION AID-59

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P R 261435Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9717

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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DAKAR FOR RDO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : EAID GV

SUBJECT : AMBASSADOR'S CONSULTATION - GUINEAN FOOD
SHORTAGE

1. AMBASSADOR WAS RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT TOURE WITH MINISTERS EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND EXCHANGES ON EVENING APRIL 25. PRESIDENT, ALTHOUGH IN RELAXED AND FRIENDLY MOOD, GREW VERY SERIOUS AS HE DISCUSSED CURRENT CRISIS IN GUINEA BROUGHT ABOUT BY SHORTAGE OF RICE AND OTHER STAPLES. PROBLEM STEMS BASICALLY FROM CONTINUING DROUGHT IN BORDER REGIONS WHICH HIT HARD.

2. PRESIDENT SAID BECAUSE OF SHORTAGES RICE RATION NOW REDUCED TO 3KG PER MONTH FOR SOME AND ONE KG FOR OTHERS. IT IS A "GRAVE FAULT", HE CONTINUED, AND THE WORST IS THAT IT IS THE WORKERS WHO NEED IT MOST WHO ARE SUFFERING MOST. MEASURES BEING TAKEN TO USE AVAILABLE STOCKS TO FEED PEOPLE IN URBAN CENTERS AND RICE NO LONGER BEING SENT TO COUNTRYSIDE. DESPITE BEST EFFORTS, HOWEVER, THERE IS NOT ENOUGH FOOD TO TIDE COUNTRY OVER UNTIL NEXT HARVEST. IN
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THIS DIRE CRISIS, PRESIDENT SAID, GUINEA MUST DEPEND ON HER

FEW FRIENDS FOR HELP.

3. KNOWING THAT THE US, WHICH IS A FRIEND, HAS THE WHEREWITHAL HE ASKED THE AMBASSADOR TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CISSOKO TO VERIFY TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT THAT CONDITIONS IN GUINEA AA THEY WOULD BE DESCRIBED BY CISSOKO WERE TRUE. THE FONMIN WOULD BE CARRYING A LETTER FROM TOURE TO PRESIDENT NIXON AND TOURE ASKED THAT AN APPOINTMENT BE REQUESTED SO CISSOKO COULD DELIVER LETTER PERSONALLY.

4. THE AMBASSADOR TOLD PRESIDENT THAT WHILE HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO HAVE CISSOKO ACCOMPANY HIM TO WASHINGTON, CISSOKO'S PRESENCE WOULD DELAY AND COMPLICATE AMBASSADOR'S MISSION. WHEREAS THE AMBASSADOR COULD TALK DIRECTLY AND INFORMALLY WITH HIS COLLEAGUES, FOR THEM TO MEET WITH MINISTER FROM FOREIGN COUNTRY WOULD REQUIRE TIME-CONSUMING COORDINATION. PRESIDENT AGREED AND IT WAS FINALLY DECIDED THAT ON ARRIVAL WASHINGTON AMBASSADOR WOULD PRESENT PRESIDENT'S REQUEST FOR CISSOKO'S APPOINTMENT AT WHITE HOUSE AND CABLE RESPONSE. TOURE SAID MAIN REASON SENDING FONMIN CISSOKO WAS TO SEE PRESIDENT OR, IF NOT PRESIDENT, HIGHEST RANKING OFFICIAL AVAILABLE WHO COULD RECEIVE HIM FOR FRANK DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL AND OVERALL US-GOG RELATIONS.

5. WHAT GUINEA NEEDS, PRESIDENT CONTINUED, IS COMMODITY AID THROUGH PL-480, TITLE I OR TITLE II. ALTHOUGH FIRST PREFERENCE IS RICE, NEED IS DESPARATE AND PEOPLE CAN USE WHATEVER SUBSTITUTE COMMODITIES AVAILABLE, SUCH AS CORN, SORGHUM, ADDITIONAL FLOUR. AGAIN EMPHASIZING GRAVITY OF SITUATION, PRESIDENT COMMENTED THAT IT WAS ONLY THANKS TO DISCIPLINE OF GUINEAN PEOPLE THAT SITUATION HAD REMAINED CALM. HE WAS AWARE THAT WORKERS IN OTHER COUNTRIES AFFECTED IN SIMILAR WAY HAD DEMONSTRATED THEIR DISCONTENT. THIS HAD NOT HAPPENED IN GUINEA. (COMMENT: SITUATION HAS HOWEVER REACHED POINT WHERE PEOPLE ARE OPENLY EXPRESSING THEIR DISCONTENT WITH LACK OF STAPLES. END COMMENT.) PRESIDENT CONCLUDED HIS COMMENTS BY AGAIN UNDERLINING GRAVITY OF SITUATION AND URGENT NEED TO TIDE PEOPLE OVER UNTIL NEXT HARVEST. THE AMBASSDDOR TOLD HIM HE WOULD COMMUNICATE THE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS BUT COULD NOT PROMISE WHAT RESULT WOULD BE.

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6. AS LONG-TERM MEASURE TO INCREASE RICE PRODUCTION AMBASSADOR THEN MENTIONED EXCELLENT WORK BEING DONE BY WARDA AND ASKED IF GUINEA PARTICIPATING. TOURE AGREED, SAID GUINEA INTERESTED IN ITS WARDA MEMBERSHIP AND HAD SENT EXPERT TO TAKE PART IN RECENT WARDA MEETING AT MONROVIA.
HAVERKAMP

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